



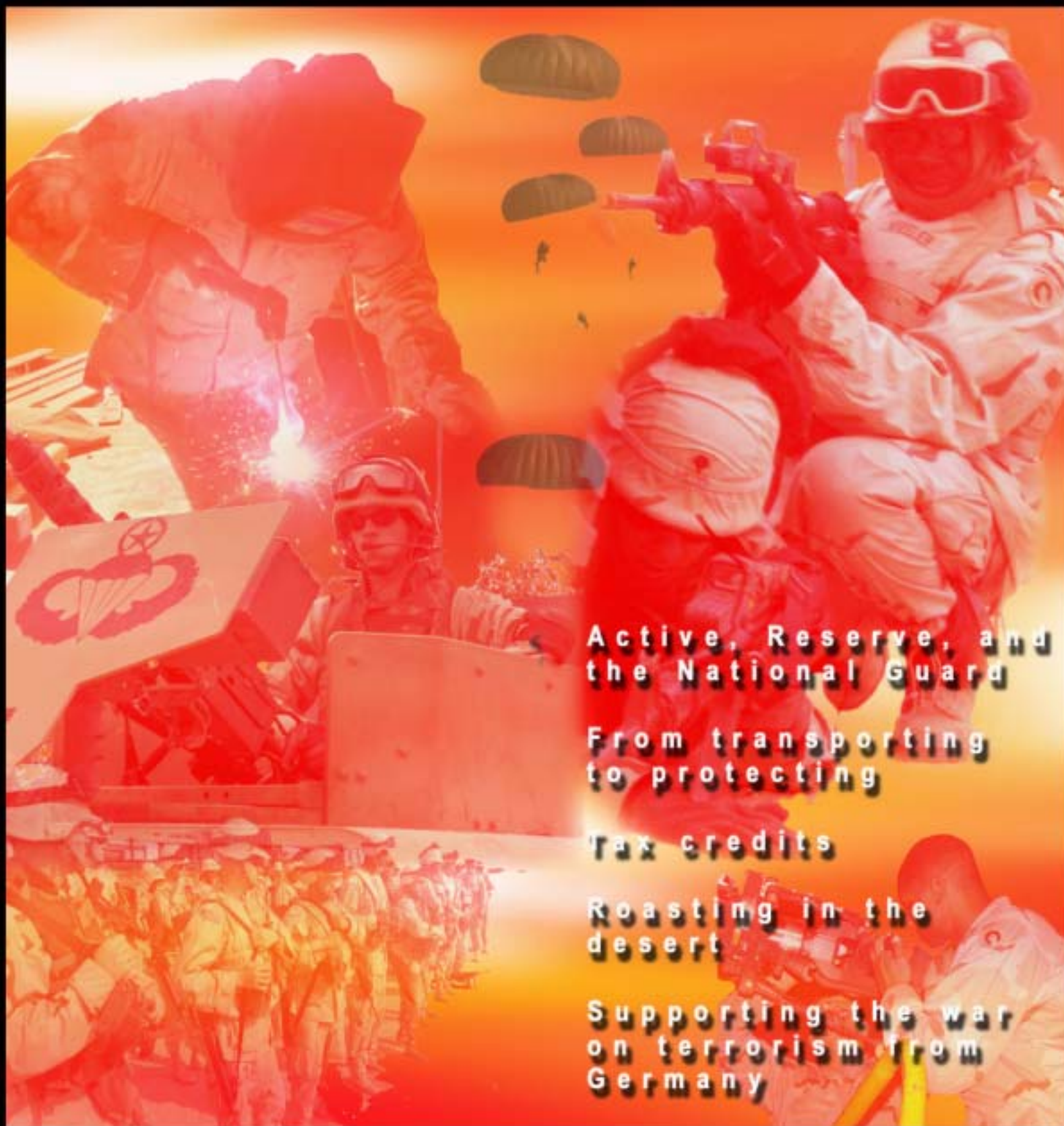
BlackJack

Provider

The Army's Contingency Support Command

Spring 2005

Volume 5



Active, Reserve, and
the National Guard

From transporting
to protecting

Tax credits

Roasting in the
desert

Supporting the war
on terrorism from
Germany

Blackjack Provider

1st COSCOM: The Army's Contingency Support Command

ON THE COVER...



Soldiers committed to fighting the war on terrorism. Cover by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO.

TOPICS

Command Team- 3
The command team discusses the command's focus.

Chaplain's Corner- 17
1st COSCOM Chaplain provides spiritual guidance.

FEATURES

From protected to protector 5
57th Transportation Company provides gun truck escort.

A shoulder to lean on 6
COSCOM medical liaison team helps Soldiers in Germany.

Issuing facility lessens 7
convoys on the road-
46th Corps Support Group provides Camp Taji with clothing and equipment issuing facility.

A Medal of Honor tale 8
From Vietnam to Iraq, Lt. Col. Gordon R. Roberts, the only active duty MOH recipient, talks about his experience.

Command helps camp 9
become a better place
46th CSG improves quality of life.

Don't fly without it- 10
Aviation battalion does more than just fly aircraft.

Newly promoted 14
sergeant runs motorpool-
Sergeant manages group level motorpool.

Commodity Managers 15
Corps Distribution Command provides Soldiers with what they need.

And more...

LIFESTYLES

Roasting in the desert- 16
Soldiers bring roasting raw coffee beans to Iraq.

A trip away from combat 18
All about Rest & Recuperation leave and an additional four day pass.

And more...

SHARP SHOOTER

Various photos taken by 1st COSCOM PAO staff to include some submissions from HHC, 1st COSCOM, 46th Corps Support Group, and 600th and 623rd Quartermaster Companies.

Blackjack Provider

Commanding General.....Brig. Gen. Yves J. Fontaine
Command Sergeant Major.....Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen
1st COSCOM Public Affairs Officer.....Capt. Sonise Lumbaca
Media Relations Officer....Capt. Craig Christian
Photojournalist.....Pfc. Jerome Bishop

A publication printed quarterly by the 1st COSCOM Public Affairs Office. Print or visual submissions of general interest to the Blackjack Provider are invited. Email submissions to sonise.lumbaca@us.army.mil or call DSN 318-829-1234.

Contents of the Blackjack Provider are not necessarily the official views of or endorsed by the U.S. Government, the Dept. of Defense, the Dept. of the Army, Fort Bragg, or the 1st Corps Support Command. The Blackjack Provider is an unofficial publication authorized by AR 360-1. Editorial content is prepared, edited, and provided by the Public Affairs Office of the 1st Corps Support Command. This newsletter follows the AP style guide.

Letters from the command

During this past quarter, America inaugurated our democratically elected 43rd President into his second term while our warriors and families have been actively involved in fighting for and supporting one of the most historic elections of our lifetimes on the opposite side of the world.

Whether we are supporting our loved ones deployed to Iraq, maintaining peace in the Sinai, or establishing a partnership with the Iraqi people, we all play important roles in serving our nation. Every one of you should be extremely proud of your contribution.

The 1st Corps Support Command's main effort is thoroughly engaged in Iraq

and doing a fantastic job. Our energy is high and our commitment unwavering in our mission to partner with the Iraqi Army, assist them in training and equipping their own forces, and work hard to eventually pull out as the Iraqis are able to do it themselves. The Soldiers are performing magnificently.

Our troops in the Sinai continue to make us very proud. You continue to hold a line of peace that proves our country's commitment to peace in the Middle East and throughout the world. You perform your mission safely and have set and maintained high standards in spite of the rotational nature of the Task Force.

It is truly amazing how stalwart our families have

been while their Soldiers are deployed in harms way to defend the ideal of freedom. From the care packages to the emails to the generous gifts, our rear detachment and families have been working very hard to support those in the field with morale sustaining supplies. And knowing that Fort Bragg is the home of America's Contingency Corps, the rear detachment has remained focused on preparing replacements to deploy and welcoming troops that come home.

As the next quarter gets into swing, we must not forget that our job is not finished yet. We must continue to hold the line and promote peace in the Sinai while the rest of those who are deployed establish a partnership with our new



Brig. Gen. Yves J. Fontaine
Commanding General

Iraqi friends. Our families and rear detachment must continue to support each other and prepare for future deployments and redeployments. We must stay safe and never allow each other to forget that we have come a long way and need to stay focused to go the rest of the way.

Thank you for your dedication, your support and your professionalism.

Airborne!



Command Sgt. Maj.
Joseph R. Allen
1st COSCOM

For the past several months, I have been traveling to various locations around Iraq observing our 1st Corps Support Command Soldiers in action. It was an eye opening experience to witness how well our Soldiers perform on a daily

basis. The culture and discipline that our Soldiers display every day are the best the Army has to offer.

The discipline, courage, and sense of right are possible due to the noncommissioned officers involvement in training and leading soldiers. Although commissioned officers are a critical asset to this organization, it is the NCOs function to make the time to enforce standards, communicate, and encourage the teams and squads that make up our fighting forces.

It is easy to distinguish units that have effective NCOs from those that do not. During a recent discussion with our NCOs,

we talked about a litmus test that shows whether there is a presence or absence of leadership, and how good leadership affects the conduct and attitudes of Soldiers when they are not supervised. Soldiers who are disciplined enough to do the right thing while unsupervised is an example of how outstanding leadership influences stellar leaders.

The use of the buddy system, the rendering of reports, the issuance of on the spot corrections, and inventories completed by our junior Soldiers have all been accomplished in the 1st COSCOM without the constant watch of

supervisors. This speaks highly of the leadership and standards that have been incorporated into their lives by NCOs. Discipline is evident in the 1st COSCOM that anything different is the exception rather than the rule.

NCOs of the 1st COSCOM are more than leaders; they are role models. You should be proud of the hard work our NCOs do and the positive influence they have on our soldiers. They continually motivate, encourage responsibility, and promote the will to strive for excellence and progression. I am proud to be among the ranks of the First Team. ATW!

A history of LSA Anaconda

By Pfc. Jerome Bishop, BlackJack Provider Staff

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, Balad, Iraq – Some 23,000 people call LSA Anaconda home, but who called it home before the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and what did they do here?

Balad Southeast Air Base, as it was called before the start of OIF, was the site of the Iraqi Air Force Academy and the home of several MiG fighter jet battalions. Although the base didn't have a large role in the defense of Iraq during the combat of OIF, it has played important roles in the military of Iraq in previous wars, said an Iraqi local national who wished to remain anonymous as a former Iraqi service member and resident of Balad SE AB.

Construction of the base began in what used to be open farmland in 1978 by a Yugoslavian company contracted to design and build it. It wasn't completed until Sept. 1, 1983, said the Iraqi.

The decision to construct the base was made before the start of the Iraq-Iran War, and although the base's purpose wasn't specifically for the war, it played an important role in the defense against the Iranian air force.

"It was used for training as well as operations," said the Iraqi worker.

Balad SE housed hundreds of aircraft of Soviet origin such as the MiG 21, MiG 23, Su-22, 24, and 25, he added.

"Some of the aircraft were used for training, the rest were used for scramble; to protect Baghdad and the border to the north," said the Iraqi. "Iraq had a strong air force; none of the aircraft were damaged."

The base was considered a super-base to the Iraqi military because of the size, location in relation to the border and the number of troops and equipment stationed here, he said.

Several other bases in Iraq were created from the same design. Although the base played a significant role in the Iraq-Iran War, it wasn't able to maintain its high standards during Operation Desert Storm. In order to undermine the base's role in the

defense, the U.S. military bombed the communication centers, hangars, unit offices, the runways, and the taxiways making the base otherwise useless. However, no ground forces made it to the base, said the Iraqi.

In hopes of maintaining the air force, the Iraqi's moved 186 aircraft off the base. Most of them went to Iran where some still remain today. After Operation Desert Storm, an Iraqi company was employed to reconstruct the base, however the aircraft on post was limited to around 50, said the Iraqi.

The base maintained regular operations until the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The military presence left the base on or around April 9, 2003, eight days before U.S. forces entered the base and took over. The sensitive materials that the post housed were taken by the Iraqis and moved to Baghdad and other higher military offices, he said.

Soon after the liberation, U.S. troops began traveling to the nearby villages to gain support from the Iraqi civilians and former military service members. Iraqis began coming onto the base to work for the U.S. military May 17, 2003. They had jobs ranging from post reconstruction to providing information to help with operations, said the Iraqi.

Although the U.S. controls LSA Anaconda, the Iraqis will have another chance in the coming years to allow it to hold an essential place among the Iraqi military.



LSA Anaconda was originally an Iraqi air base housing many Russian made fighter planes including the MiG and Su series. Photo by Pfc. Jerome Bishop.

From protected to protector *logistical unit takes on combat mission*

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO

AL ASAD, Iraq—The 57th Transportation Company has taken on a mission that is uncommon to combat service support units, but in light of the transformation of the battlefield, has become a necessary norm for units of its type.

Logistical units are finding that creating a gun truck escort unit organic to their organization will not only benefit the unit, but also free up combat arms assets whose mission include providing security and the escorting of these types of units.

“Combat service support units have never really been in a position where they have had to be self-sufficient in protecting themselves in a combat environment, especially like the ones we are dealing with today,” said Maj. Randell C. Gaston, deputy support operations officer, 561st Corps Support Group.

“Transportation companies would rely heavily upon combat arms units such as the infantry or combat support, like the military police. There was a clear line of distinction as to who owned what. We have learned within the past 10 years that there is no longer a distinction and that we can’t pull [combat arms] guys away to protect us. So, we have gone back to the basic instilling that everyone is a Soldier first and everything else comes second [like the Marines],” Gaston said.

During mobilization, there is a certain amount of train up for reservists prior to deploying. Training brigades, used to assist in the mobilization of reserve units,

were putting together scenarios that were training Soldiers to focus on combat logistic patrols and the need for them to protect themselves. Gaston discovered that there was a conflict in that there was no line of distinction between the two.

“The training brigades were using light mechanized infantry tactics that combat service support Soldiers aren’t familiar with. It was so much information and a lot of it was conflicting, so I took on the role of rewriting the scenarios,” Gaston said.

Gaston was picked to spearhead this operation due to the amount of combat arms experience he brought within his personal knowledge arsenal.

A great portion of the revised training was validated in Kuwait, where Soldiers received additional live-fire training, Gaston said.

After careful evaluation and in-depth training, the 561st CSG, commanded by Col. Brent Hamm, created a gun truck company made up of Soldiers and equipment pulled from various units under his command.



Light medium tactical vehicles, M-1078, with level one armor used by the 57th Transportation Company, 561st Corps Support Group to conduct convoy escorts during combat logistic patrols. Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO.

“We didn’t put [the gun truck operation] together without having knowledge. I come from a background with combat experience, and so does our group commander. Between the gun truck company commander, his platoon leaders and noncommissioned officers, they too have combat experience where they served in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi (Arabia) and past deployments to Iraq,” he said.

Prior to taking over this heavy responsibility, members of the 57th Transportation Company spent over 6,000 hours in weapons training and 4,000 hours in convoy logistic patrol training.

Having the responsibility to cover down on two different tasks on a daily basis can cause a Soldier to detract from how important a

See *ESCORTS*, page 20

1st Corps Support Command

Soldiers provide shoulder to lean on

'We provide everything health care can't'

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca
1st COSCOM PAO

LANSTUHL, Germany—Great deeds in battle are never overlooked or forgotten by those who were there to witness the acts. The same holds true for the aftermath of those who have become casualties of war, be it by enemy fire or sickness acquired from the elements. For three members of the 1st Corps Support Command, their selfless duty will not be overlooked nor forgotten by those whose paths they've crossed.

Master Sgt. Ernesto M. Nieto, Healthcare noncommissioned officer, Corps Distribution Command, Sgt. 1st Class Michael A. Johnson, information systems operator analyst, CDC and Sgt. 1st Class Kevin L. Baker, parachute rigger, 46th Corps Support Command, have been sent to Germany to provide the best assistance to Soldiers the army has to offer through one of its liaison programs. They are medical liaison officers (LNO) at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (LRMC) in Landstuhl, Germany.

"I've assisted service members from every branch of service," said Johnson.

Johnson had been an LNO for close to three months at the LRMC and between the other two members of his team, has taken care of 251 patients. They currently have 21 patients under their care.

"As a liaison, we provide everything that health care can't

provide. [For example], comfort from the fellowship of another Soldier, a shoulder to cry on, a hand to hold, a friend to confide in, a figure of guidance, and a place of comfort," Johnson said.

Additional responsibilities include, reception of injured service members, facilitating communication between families and the military agencies, coordinating for transportation for non-ambulatory patients, administrative duties, tracking patients' medical care and appointments, helping service members understand medical team diagnosis and providing supportive encouragement to all patients.

The medical center is also where Soldiers who are seriously injured in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan are sent, Nieto said.

Liaisons are involved with the Soldiers to a farther degree than what is listed on their task organization, Johnson said.

"Often, Soldiers pass through here that don't have a liaison assigned to them. So, you become more than a Soldier, you become a friend or family," Johnson said.

Some Soldiers confide in their liaisons about their injuries and illnesses. While some are visibly evident with their diagnosis Johnson has learned not to ask a Soldier what happened or why the Soldier is here.

"You may not be ready for the answer," Johnson said.

"I've looked into the eyes of an injured Soldier while he questioned

why he survived and not his buddy. I've seen bruised faces smile like nothing happened. They're just glad to be back, he said.

There is a personal attachment that liaisons develop through interaction with their fellow wounded comrade. Johnson and others in positions like his, comfort the service members the best way they can. In return, the gratitude and respect of the injured is returned to the liaison.

"I have been hugged, taken to lunch, thanked continuously, saluted and called from the states after a patient was returned to home station. I thank them for allowing me to meet them," he said.

Johnson admits that it is a tough responsibility to be a liaison, one that takes mental fortitude.

"One of the biggest challenges arise when a Soldier has been informed that he/she will be returning to their home station or returned to duty because of their injury or illness and they expect the opposite. I'm proud to say that most Soldiers want to return to duty, and not be sent home," he said.

The whole liaison business affects you mentally, Johnson said. "I've had to hold back tears and remain a 'tough guy', not allowing my feelings to exist," he said.

Johnson admits that prior to taking on this responsibility, he didn't know what to expect. However after taking the job he truly feels that this is one of the most

See LIAISON, page 14

Issuing facility contributes to convoy mitigation

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO

TAJI, Iraq— It used to be that Soldiers would have to conduct convoys to Logistics Support Area Anaconda or Camp Victory just to pick up a new set of boots or exchange uniforms because the unit didn't have a Central Issue Facility to support them here.

With the threat of improvised explosive devices and vehicle borne explosive devices targeting combat logistic patrols, Soldiers have one less reason to be on the dangerous roads because of a small operation initiated by the 46th Corps Support Group, 1st Corps Support Command, said Warrant Officer Darin J. Gilderoy, property book officer, 46th CSG.

The initiative for the Organizational Clothing Individual Equipment facility, an issuing point, to be created at Taji came from Gilderoy and Master Sgt. Samuel E. Perry, property book noncommissioned officer in charge, based on their experiences in Afghanistan.

"There wasn't a CIF [in Afghanistan], so I established an OCIE there. Chief (Gilderoy) came on board later during that deployment and we eventually developed it into a large central issuing facility out sourced by contractors that is still operational today," Perry said.

"We hope to do the same here at Taji, but for now what we have in place is making things a lot easier for everyone," Gilderoy said.

The project began with Gilderoy and Perry gathering equipment and clothing items left behind by their predecessors, the 1st Cavalry Division. Once gathered and placed in a central location, they requisitioned the remainder of the items based on the number of 46th CSG Soldiers they had to support. The issuing facility opened Feb. 1, and has been operational since.

"We don't only support 46th (CSG) Soldiers, we now have Soldiers from all over Taji coming to us," Perry said, in reference to the word-of-mouth popularity of the facility.

Its usefulness is not only producing supplies, but its presence helps to keep warfighters available for units' missions.

"The fact that we have this facility has saved lives as far as convoys go. Each time a Soldier goes out on the road for whatever reason they are open to all forms of (improvised explosive devices) attacks and small arms fire. Having this facility here has decreased the amount of time Soldiers have to spend on the road," said Sgt. Shawn W. Batien, OCIE noncommissioned officer in charge and an automated logistic specialist.

Batien has a team of about five Soldiers that run four stations providing equipment and uniform issue items. At the first station, Soldiers can exchange desert issued combat boots for a one-for-one exchange. They can also receive an initial issue. The facility carries all three versions of the boot.

"Sometimes for whatever reason, some Soldiers will deploy without their full issue, like two pairs instead of three pairs of boots. Facilities like ours ensure that the Soldier receives what they are suppose to have," Batien said.

The second station includes desert camouflage uniform tops and flight gloves.

See ISSUING, page 22



Sgt. Shawn W. Batien, Organizational Clothing Individual Equipment noncommissioned officer in charge, 46th CSG, exchanges a Soldier's worn set of Desert Camouflage Uniform for a set of new ones. In the past, Soldiers would have to travel in convoy logistical patrols to other installations to receive uniforms and equipment. Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO.

From Vietnam to Iraq: a Medal of Honor tale

By Pfc. Jerome Bishop
BlackJack Provider Staff

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, Balad, Iraq-- More than 3,400 Medals of Honor have been awarded to date, and rarely are those recipients alive to receive the honor.

One of those rare individuals and the youngest living Medal of Honor recipient still serves on active duty as the commander of the Troop Support Battalion, 1st Corps Support Command.

In 1968, at 18 years old, Roberts enlisted in the U.S. Army as an infantryman and left his hometown of Lebanon, Ohio, to serve in the war in Vietnam. After basic training, advanced individual training and airborne school at Fort Benning, Ga., Roberts was assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division in West Germany. The unit deployed following the Russian occupation of Prague in 1968, to replace Soldiers deployed to the Czech border. Six months into his Germany assignment, Roberts was reassigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and was deployed to Vietnam. Months later, Company D, one of Roberts' sister companies, was lured into an ambush centered in the middle of a U-shape formation of enemy bunkers. The company was unable to move and was receiving numerous casualties, he said.

"The situation with my sister company seemed to be getting worse and worse. We got the order to air assault an unguarded



Lt. Col. Gordon R. Roberts, Troop Support Battalion commander, received the Medal of Honor in 1971 for combat actions in Vietnam. Now he commands the 1st Corps Support Command troops of the Troop Support Battalion. Photo by Pfc. Jerome Bishop.

ridgeline about a click, or one kilometer, away," Roberts said.

His platoon was dropped in to relieve Co. D from the position in which they were trapped, he said.

"I was on point at the time, the four guys behind me were hit," Roberts said.

A gap in the line was created when those men were hit from a concealed bunker and Roberts tried to do the best he could to close it, he said.

"There really wasn't an alternative to hitting that bunker," Roberts said.

Roberts assaulted the bunker himself, taking out a two-man team inside. After securing the first bunker, his position was engaged by enemy fire from a second bunker and he had to attack and disable the enemy soldiers in it. Then fire was received from two other bunkers

and he had to assault both, killing the three-to four-man enemy teams inside. At that time, he joined with Co. D until the rest of his platoon arrived, he said.

Following the engagement, which lasted around two or three hours, his platoon came to establish a perimeter to ensure a safe evacuation of the Soldiers of Co. D. wounded in the ambush and the members of his platoon wounded in the following engagement, Roberts said.

Crossing the line of duty that is required by a Soldier in such a situation takes more than anyone could think, Roberts explained. "If the company didn't get the job done, you don't want to be in the low ground, especially with night coming. You're trained to do a job and that was the job at hand."

Roberts returned home in the spring of 1970 and was assigned to Fort Meade, Md., where he was on call to assist in the control of political riots occurring in Washington, D.C., he said.

In March 1971, Roberts received the news that for his actions in Vietnam he would be awarded the Medal of Honor. In less than a week, he was invited to the White House to be awarded personally by President Richard Nixon, Roberts said.

After the end of his first term of service in 1971, Roberts continued serving in the Army Reserve for three years but went inactive until the mid 1980's when he joined the National Guard. After his time in the guard, he came back on active duty as a commissioned officer in 1991 and serves as the commander of the TSB at LSA Anaconda.

See ROBERTS, page 20

Corps Support Group helps camp become a better place

By Pfc. Jerome Bishop BlackJack Provider Staff

CAMP TAJI, Iraq—As with any installation in Iraq, change comes over time, however, the Soldiers of the 46th Corps Support Group, 1st Corps Support Command wasted no time in making Camp Taji a home.

Since arriving at Camp Taji in December 2004, The CSG has already made significant improvements to the main post dining facility, gymnasium, Freedom Call Center and to a Morale, Welfare, and Recreation building that had been for the most part left unused.

“The building [left by 593rd Corps Support Group, 3rd COSCOM] was used for the same thing (in the past) but we enhanced it by adding cardio and weight equipment,” said 1st Sgt. Kenneth McKoy, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 46th CSG’s first sergeant.

Before deploying, the company had purchased and packed weight and cardio training equipment. The items included treadmills and stair climbers, from the MWR back at Fort Bragg to bring over and use, said McKoy. However Physical Training isn’t the only use for the newly renovated building.

The MWR half houses a stereo system for DJs, a dance floor and seating area for games. It also doubles as an aerobics room. The facility also has an outside sitting area.

“We used [the MWR] area for a Super Bowl party, a Christmas party, and I’m going to use it [in the future] for our Soldier-of-the-Month boards,” said McKoy.

“There are other facilities on post, but by having this one right here, it enables our Soldiers to set out and seek some of their physical goals and let off their steam while being close to the company,” he said.

Also recently added was the Freedom Call Center, which allows troops to call anywhere for 30 minutes at no charge.

The Freedom Calls Foundation Network provides the opportunity for Soldiers, more than 8,000 miles away, to participate in family events, such as births, birthdays, weddings and schools graduations, said Maj. Andrew Walters, 46th CSG Combat Service Support Automation Management Office officer in charge.

The Freedom Call Center, unlike other call centers on post, gives the Soldiers in line something to do while waiting.

The Freedom Call Center has a waiting room with a large screen television that seats 28 Soldiers. “Eventually we intend to expand the wait room by adding a sitting area with tables, books, newspapers and magazines,” Walter said. There are overall plans to expand the facility with an additional 800 square feet that will include adding 20 more telephones and about 30 computers for internet use.

The facility runs 24-hour operations, with 46th CSG Soldiers available during this time to provide internet and telephone technical support.

They also have video teleconferencing capability that was recently used to allow an Army National Guard unit from New Mexico to participate in a Native American Pow Wow.

“The group on the distant end conducted the Pow Wow dressed up in their traditional Native American clothing, while Soldiers on this end watched, danced and sang along,” said Chief Warrant Officer Barry Jefferson, information systems technician, CSSAMO, 46th CSG.

The VTC is also used for the command’s Family Readiness Group program.

“We schedule time for the families back at home to talk with Soldiers here,” Jefferson said.

“One time we surprised a Soldier with seeing his new born for the first time. And it was all due to the generosity of the Freedom Call Foundation Network,” Jefferson said.

Currently the center provides VTC, seven phones, six video conferencing stations, four video e-mail stations, and 32 computers with internet access for deployed Soldiers free of charge.

In addition to the new 46th MWR, the Soldiers of the 46th CSG also ensured positive changes to the post DFAC.

Improvements made to the DFAC include decorations, improved food such as nutritional facts, and more positive Kellogg, Brown, and Root employed workers, said Pfc. Juan Ruiz, a member of the HHC DFAC council.

Decorations that were added to the DFAC, named Patriot Café to show an American theme, were the flags of each of the 50 states in the union. State governors

See IMPROVE, page 19

Don't fly without it

Aviation battalion ensures safety of pilots and passengers

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, BALAD, Iraq—You are driving along in your car, and then all of a sudden it makes a funny sound. The next thing that happens is smoke is coming from the engine—uh, oh, looks like car trouble. The smart and only thing to do is pull the vehicle off the road and call or wait for assistance.

When it comes to an aircraft, pulling over to the side of the road is not an option. Instead the situation becomes a life or death matter. Unlike cars, repairing a n d maintaining an aircraft requires mores than changing its oil and

checking the engine to prevent breakdowns. For a one of a kind element within the 1st Corps Support Command, part of their maintenance involves not only preventive maintenance, but also complete dismantling of the aircraft and test flights once reassembled.

“We fix all Army aircraft and we provide the Class IX yard for two locations, LSAA and Q-West,” said Lt. Col. Terence Reeves, commander, 4th Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment, 507th Corps Support Group.

The unit is currently running phase maintenance operations; a vital operation that ensures aircraft safety.

According to the Phase Maintenance for the Army Aircraft technical bulletin, phase maintenance is the

maintenance and replacement of aircraft parts that manufacturers recommend replacing after an aircraft has flown for a certain number of hours.

Scheduled preventive maintenance allows fewer flight disruptions, less costly repairs and minimizes secondary damage due to premature failure.

“Normally phase maintenance operations will take

two to three months stateside. We are doing it here in about a month,” said Maj. Tim Resst, commander, Company F, 4th Bn., 159th Avn. Regt.

Company F is a Army National Guard unit from Michigan and is one of four subordinate companies that a r e subordinate to 4th Bn., 159th Avn. Regt.



Pvt. Kenneth A. Martinez (left), powertrain aircraft mechanic, and Sgt. Ricardo Mariano, nondestructor inspector, Company I, 4th Bn., 159th Avn. Regt. inspect an aircraft for cracks in its frame. The inspection is part of a 500 hour phase maintenance. Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO.

Because the unit runs 24 hour operations, they can complete phase maintenance in one-third the time.

Once phase maintenance is completed test flyers fly the aircraft to ensure that the planes are in good condition.

Resst also attributed the decreased time in getting the aircrafts back in the air to having a higher priority in receiving repair part.

The 4th Bn, 159th Avn. Regt., dismantles all Army aircraft at LSAA Anaconda after they've flown anywhere from 400 to 500 hours, depending on the aircraft. Additionally, the unit is responsible for providing aviation maintenance and supplies to support units operating within the Multi-National Corps Iraq.

“We provide maintenance folks and test flyers for the aircraft that we work on,” said Reeves. “An optimum maintenance system provides maximum cost effectiveness while maintaining safety of flight.”

Reeves’ is also responsible for aircraft spare parts and he is the aviation advisor to Brig. Gen. Yves J. Fontaine, commanding general of LSA Anaconda. Additionally, his unit provides direct support to the 18th Aviation Brigade and provides back up support to the 42nd Infantry Division and 3rd Infantry Division.

“We not only provide aviation maintenance support at LSAA, we also have a detachment, the 1st Battalion, 151st Aviation Task Force that provides support at Q-West,” Reeves said.

The workload doesn’t end there. Within the battalion there is a unit called the Shops Platoon. The Shops Platoon is where the rubber meets the road during phase maintenance and regular scheduled maintenance.

The platoon is part of Company I, 4th Bn., 159th Avn. Regt., and is made up of about 30 Soldiers that operate seven sections: Power Plant, Air Frame, Non-Destructor Inspector (NDI), Power Train, Welding, Machine, and Hydraulics or Pneudraulics.

“Each section specializes in contributing to aircraft maintenance,” said Shops Platoon’s Sgt. 1st Class Greg L. Mayo, platoon sergeant.



Soldiers from 4th Bn., 159th Avn. Regt. conduct maintenance on an aircraft during a recovery operation in Baghdad, Iraq Feb 18 after the aircraft was involved in a collision with a bird. Photo by Capt. Matthew J. Barbour, 4th Bn., 159th Avn. Regt.

The Power Plant section repairs aircraft engines. They also conduct phase maintenance inspections; meanwhile, the Air Frame section specializes in the structural repair of helicopters.

“I make patches out of sheet metal to cover up a portion of the aircraft where there are holes that are created for whatever reason,” said Spc. Mark D. Judd, aircraft structural repairer, who treats his role in the overall mission as an art form.

Judd takes pictures of his work before and after so that he can have references to work from for future tasks.



A Soldier from 4th Bn., 159th Avn. Regt. conducts maintenance on an aircraft engine during a recovery operation in Baghdad, Iraq Feb 18. The battalion has many teams of Soldiers who work specific areas of responsibilities in aircraft maintenance. Photo by Capt. Matthew J. Barbour, 4th Bn., 159th Avn. Regt.

“I take pictures of all of the repairs that I do. We ensure that we get it right the first time,” he said.

The Power Train’s responsibilities include maintenance on rotors, transmission and the dry shafts on an aircraft.

“A unique thing about the members of our Non-Destructor Inspector section is that they are the only two Soldiers of their kind on Balad,” Mayo said.

The NDI responsibilities include inspection for cracks within the frames and the body of the aircraft.

The Hydraulics section responsibilities include repairs of all hydraulic lines, brakes, pumps and actuators on an aircraft. The section also maintains ground support

See AVIATION, page 22

SHARP SHOOTER



(Top left) Two Soldiers from the 600th Quartermaster company put together care packages to be sent to 1st Corps Support Command Soldiers in Iraq; photo by 1st Lt. Wenda Throckmorton, 600th QM Co.



(Above) Soldiers from the 1st COSCOM's Inspector General and Equal Opportunity Staff visit the the Ziggurat of Ur in Tallil Air Base, Iraq; photo by unknown.

(Left) Iraqi children from a local village give thumbs up while shouting "George Bush is good" during a humanitarian aid mission conducted by the 1st COCSOM Civil Military Operations detachment; photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO .



(Below left) Members of the 623rd Quartermaster Company prep their gun trucks for a patrol they are getting ready to do. The unit not only conducts Quick Reaction Force operations, but also gun truck escort missions; photo by Capt. Michael K. Cole, 623rd QM. CO.



(Left) A Soldier from the 223rd Transportation Company (a reserve unit from Dallas, Texas), 68th Corps Support Battalion, 1st COSCOM, works on up-arming an Iraqi National Guard vehicle at Camp Taji. The company is responsible for up-arming Iraqi transportation unit vehicles with level three armor; photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO.

(Below) Two Soldiers from the 46th Corps Support Group, 1st COSCOM, draw an audience of Soldiers while performing a Pearl Jam song during down time at Camp Taji; photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO.



(Above) A group of Soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment load up on to a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter in order to conduct recovery operations of a downed aircraft in Baghdad, Iraq Feb 18. Photo by Capt. Matthew J. Barbour, 4th Bn., 159th Avn. Regt.



(Right) A group of Soldiers from the 623rd Quartermaster Company back at Fort Bragg, N.C., prepare to repair the new MC-6 parachute system with a contractor present as a guide. The new parachute system will be replacing the current MC-1C parachute. photo by 1st Lt. Wenda Throckmorton, 600th QM Co.



Newly promoted sergeant runs motorpool

By Pfc. Jerome Bishop
BlackJack Provider Staff

CAMP TAJI, Iraq--The motor pool of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 46th Corps Support Group, 1st Corps Support Command faced a difficult challenge before deploying from Fort Bragg in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom — lack of a motor sergeant.

Not long after being deployed, Sgt. Steven Whitehurst, the new HHC motor pool motor sergeant, was assigned to fill a position above his rank with only five years in the Army, and has been able to do so with few problems.

“Our motor sergeant (before deployment) couldn’t come due to health reasons, so they gave me a Ziploc bag with all the keys in it and said ‘congratulations motor sergeant,’” Whitehurst said.



Sgt. Steven Whitehurst, motor sergeant, 46th CSG is responsible for running the corps support group’s motorpool while supervising six Soldiers. Photo by Pfc. Jerome Bishop, 1st COSCOM PAO.

Being a motor sergeant, a job usually reserved for the senior staff sergeants or sergeants first class, is by no means an easy task. In order to successfully fulfill the tasks assigned, Whitehurst looked for help that would eventually make or break his ability to lead, he said.

“It was kind of rocky at first being a (newly promoted) E-5 thrown into a staff sergeant slot. It’s not just being in charge of turning wrenches but doing the administration work too,” Whitehurst said. “None of this would be possible without the help of my Soldiers.”

Whitehurst is responsible for about 35 vehicles, including generators and other machines. At the same time, he is also responsible for training and leading six Soldiers who fall under his leadership at the shop, Whitehurst said.

“It’s been quite a learning experience,” said Whitehurst. “I caught myself going out to work on the trucks and [my Soldiers] had to remind me ‘this isn’t what you do’.”

“Everyone is trying to help him out,” said Vance. “He’s a good leader, he’s good with his Soldiers and he does a great job.”

Spc. Curtis Vance, a generator mechanic in the motor pool is a Soldier who has served with Whitehurst on a previous deployment to Uzbekistan in 2003, and has known him for almost three years and has worked for him since. Whitehurst became shop foreman last year.

“I just can’t stress enough, I couldn’t have

asked for a better group of Soldiers,” said Whitehurst. “I wouldn’t be in this position without the dedication they put into the motor pool.”

“I joined the Army to do something for my country, it may sound corny but I’ve always supported what the Army stands for, and what we are doing over here in Iraq for these people who are tired of living in fear,” Whitehurst said. “My Soldiers and me are not about to let these other Soldiers go outside that gate with a disabled truck because their lives depend on us making sure that our trucks are combat ready.”

LIAISON, from page 6

important jobs he has ever done, Johnson said.

Johnson has a message to send to Soldiers and their family members.

“To the leaders throughout the 1st COSCOM, and the families and friends of Soldiers that pass through Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, it is our honor to take care of your Soldiers. We will do our best to assist them in anyway, to help them return to the field or return home,” Johnson said.

The LRMC is the largest American hospital outside of the United States, and the only American tertiary hospital in Europe. It provides primary and tertiary care, hospitalization, and treatment for more than 52,000 American military personnel and their families within the center’s boundaries. The center also provides specialized care for the more than 250,000 additional American military personnel and their families in the European Theater.

Getting the warfighters what they need

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO

ARIFJAN, Kuwait—Two small but essential elements in supporting warfighters on the ground ensure that the logistics system works in Iraq are stationed here. The Corps Distribution Command, 1st Corps Support Command, Commodity Representative and the Theater Distribution Center, are responsible for pushing forward classes of supplies into Iraq for all units that fall under the Multi-National Corps Iraq.

“When any of our units in Iraq need Class II, IV, VII, IX, or CI IX (Air) items, we locate them in Kuwait if the item isn’t available in Iraq, and push it forward to the units,” said Sgt. 1st Class Anthony D. Austin, Commodity Manager noncommissioned officer.

An example of these classes of supplies includes uniforms, construction material, and repair parts.

The TDC then comes in to play. This team is comprised of about 10 Soldiers, and based on the priorities submitted by the Commodity Representative, processes and manifests vehicles that travel to Iraq with these classes of supplies.

The commodity representative element, supervised by Warrant Officer Andrew Jackson, CDC, 1st COSCOM, acts as the 1st COSCOM’s liaison office for Multi-National Corps Iraq.

“The TDC plays an important role in supporting the warfighters on the ground, and ensuring that the logistic system works,” Jackson said.

Using daily supply tools to track parts, review supply stock status and verifying that the item is physically on hand in theater while working hand to hand with various

military agencies is a big part of the TDC’s operation, he said.

Everything from inventories of trucks, containers and the required items that fill them to actual uploading of the vehicles involves members of the TDC. And this is accomplished by closely working with KBR employees.

“We also work on getting displaced items back to the unit or final destination,” said Staff Sgt. Kenneth Jackson, Army expeditor, TDC, CDC.

This is done prior to turning equipment, like vehicles, into Retro (retrograde) when the equipment is unable to be identified as to whom it belongs to.

Retro is the term used to place this type of equipment back into the Army’s system in order for other units to obtain the equipment.

“We are here to help the units that require our assistance, but our priorities are those units that the CDC commodity reps direct as priorities,” Jackson said.

There are challenges on both sides of the operation.

“Getting the equipment up north by air [to Iraq] can sometimes cause challenges for our teams,” Austin said.

The Army will not fly the equipment, which is easier than ground transportation, unless they are able to fill three or more pallets. Another challenge is flying supplies up north overnight, Austin said.

“We also have to be ready for last minute changes and shipment,” Jackson said. [We] might be expecting one convoy and instead two of them will come in. But we are up for the challenge,” he said.

“Whatever we can do to ensure that units get what they need,” Austin said.

Troops Deployed In Combat Areas Get Tax Credit Options

By American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Servicemembers receiving federal tax exemptions for some or all of their military pay may now elect to apply for certain tax credit options, the chief of the Armed Forces Tax Council said recently.

Troops deployed to combat zones can now apply for tax refunds based on earned income tax credits, as well as additional child-tax credits, explained Army Lt. Col. Janet Fenton, the AFTC’s executive director.

The earned income credit, Fenton explained, primarily involves lower-income filers with children. The additional child tax credit, she added, may provide refunds for children under age 17.

Servicemembers who want to apply for the credit refunds are required to fill out and file a federal tax return, Fenton noted.

Enlisted troops serving in combat areas already have all of their military pay excluded from federal taxes, Fenton pointed out, while officers in combat zones can exclude up to \$6,529 of their monthly pay. Troops deployed to non-combat overseas areas have until June 15 to file their income taxes, Fenton said.

Troops serving in a combat zone, she pointed out, have up to 180 days to file their taxes after departing the area.

For example, “someone who is in Iraq right now,” she noted, “would not have to file their 2004 tax return until they leave Iraq.” However, some overseas servicemembers would want to file early, Fenton said, because they may be due a refund.

And, married service members deployed to combat and non-combat overseas locales can opt to have spouses file tax returns, she noted, provided there’s an applicable power of attorney.

Roasting in the desert

LIFESTYLES

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca
1st COSCOM PAO

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, Balad, Iraq— From the mountains of Central America comes the knowledge of four generations in drying, grinding and roasting the seeds that develop the stimulating aromatic drink that has become a military culinary tradition – pass me a cup o’ joe, please.

BlackJack Java, a coffee shop that boasts roasting its own raw green coffee beans, is open for service on LSA Anaconda; thanks to 1st Corps Support Command Soldiers, who have brought a coffee roasting operation into a combat zone.

“Long deployments like these can seem even longer if morale becomes low. During my time here, I wanted to be a positive influence. So I decided to use something I enjoyed doing during my spare time,” said Maj. Joseph Izaguirre, deputy intelligence officer.

He is the “coffee commander,” founder and responsible for the overall operations of roasting and brewing fresh coffee here. It’s his



Maj. Joseph Izaguirre (left), and Maj. Jeffrey Kemp remove raw green coffee beans from its burlap sack in order to prep them for roasting here at BlackJack Java. The raw coffee beans come from various countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya. Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO.

level of expertise that earned him the distinction.

“(Soldiers) drink coffee everyday to get them through the long days. I have four generations of coffee experience and I thought, ‘why not bring it to the desert with me,’” Izaguirre said.

His family migrated to Honduras from Spain, and it was there on 31 acres of mountain land where his family established their coffee business.

“This is my hobby,” Izaguirre said. “I make people happy and I enjoy doing it.”

With the help and donations from various coffee business affiliates, the BlackJack Java coffee shop was established.

The coffee shop has two parts to it, the actual factory area, where the roasting of fresh coffee beans take place, and an outdoor sitting area for Soldiers to drink their brew during breaks within the workday.

Within the work area, there is a roasting machine, named “Julianne”, two industrial espresso machines and a basic supply of coffee accessories.

Izaguirre bought the roaster, for a fraction of the price it would normally be sold. The two espresso machines were donated.

“When I contacted the roasting company about this project, they were excited to hear about Soldiers wanting to roast and serve fresh coffee for our fighting men and women,” Izaguirre said.

The company also gave Izaguirre a week’s worth of free training and provided a coffee consultant to add to his personal knowledge and experience.



(Top) Raw green coffee beans are displayed next to roasted coffee beans. The roasting process takes 12 minutes and must be monitored throughout the whole roasting process. Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO.

See *COFFEE*, page 21

Chaplain's Corner

MAINTAINING 'BATTLE RHYTHM' IS IMPORTANT

By Chaplain (COL) David Reese
1st COSCOM Chaplain



Five months into our deployment, we are beginning to hit a stride that is bittersweet. Most of us have learned to adapt to this strange schedule called "battle rhythm." While it brings some sense of new familiarity and consistency, it is always tempered by the fact that home is thousands of miles away and our family's "battle rhythm" is eight hours behind ours – and totally different.

At this point we begin to realize that this is not a sprint, but a marathon: it requires different muscles and a different perspective to maintain a rhythm that will allow us to complete this race. I'd like to offer some hints that may be helpful. Some of them are applicable as well to your family – please share them as you see fit.

And it came to pass: It is a biblical saying that precedes some activity or event, signifying that something – usually something of importance – is about to happen. However a modern parable takes a different approach: "It didn't come to stay – it came to pass." This hopeful perspective reminds us that our orders are "TCS" – "temporary" change of station – not "PCS"

(permanent). Maintain your perspective!

Learn while you earn: Few of us would disagree that the financial perks of being deployed – tax-free combat pay, additional allowances, etc. – are pretty significant. But there are some other perks that are not financially apparent: the opportunity to learn about ourselves, grow deeper friendships, and take advantage of the time to develop maturity in the spiritual and emotional arenas. What a waste to have spent this time simply existing when we could begin or deepen a journey that leads to growth!

Explore gratitude: Just a little reminder – we got it good! Burger King, Pizza Hut, first run movies and telephones. We need to practice being thankful for what we have and expressing that thanks to God and others. Next time you walk into the shower and find that is clean (and you don't have a scrub brush in your hand!), look for the TCN that makes a pittance of a wage to clean up after you – and tell them with a big smile, "Thank you." It'll change your day – and maybe theirs.

There's more; things you have discovered yourself that help you get by and cope. List them; pass them around to your friends who look at this marathon and say, "How am I ever going to make it to the end?" Our "battle rhythm" – which consists not only of managing our time but our perspective – will make this race bearable and will lead to mission accomplishment.

From the Mule's Mouth

Approximately three months into this deployment, what have you learned so far?



"Teamwork gets you a long way and never take for granted the things that you have."

-Pfc. Grant Jolitz, Fire Fighter
8th Ordnance Company,
507th Corps Support Group, Iraq



"I learned very quickly that you don't really know a person until you are deployed with them. In garrison you can't really get to know them like this."

-Sgt. Chrystel Drummonds
Administrative Clerk
HHC, 46th Corps Support Group, Iraq



"With deployments, depending on the mission at hand, your area of responsibility can grow or change."

-Sgt. Nicholas E. Black
Night Battle Captain and Automations NCO
Task Force 189th, 46th Corps Support Group,
Kuwait

A trip away from combat

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO

In recent years, deployments to combat zones for the Army have increased from approximately six months to a full year or more, or as how some would like to put it, "till the mission is done." Because of lengthy deployments, and the separation from family and combat stress that can accompany it, the Army has programs to combat these issues while boosting morale.

Two of these programs are Rest and Recuperation leave (R&R) and the Fighter Management Pass Program (FMPP).

"R&R is to give the Soldiers two weeks to go home and be with their families or travel to another region to get a break from combat and the stress that comes with it," said Staff Sgt. Debra A. Davis, personnel service and finance noncommissioned officer, Troop Support Battalion.

Soldiers and Department of Defense civilians are authorized to take R&R leave while serving in a Joint Operational Area in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

R&R leave is for 15 days and is charged as ordinary leave. Additional to those days are three days to get to your destination and three days to return, totaling to about 21 days. Personnel are eligible if they are deployed in theater for 365 days and may take leave between their second and tenth month.

Each unit is allocated a number of days and a percentage of the personnel that are allowed to take leave.

"Since November, we have sent 62 Soldiers home to their families and different parts of the world," said Davis.

The whole point of R and R is to send Soldiers to where ever they would like to spend their personal time, be it to a foreign country or home, Davis said.

"We have had Soldiers go as far as Germany, but most go home because they miss their families and friends. They also go home because they want to return to what they are familiar," Davis said.

Within the 1st Corps Support Command, Soldiers have traveled to Germany, Maryland, Alabama, North Carolina and there are even scheduled R&R leave dates for Puerto Rico.

"[R&R] is definitely a morale booster for [the Soldiers]. It is something that they can look forward especially when traveling to a location where under different circumstance they may not have the opportunity to travel to," Davis said.

Most Soldiers try to take their leave in May, June or July according to Davis. However, because of allocations, leave, for the most part is spread out evenly across the other months.

"Soldiers will try to take their leave around significant events such as graduations, births, and weddings. We try our best to accommodate these Soldiers because these are event that for the most part are once a lifetime," Davis said.

However, the 1st COSCOM doesn't use preferential treatment just because one Soldier has an event and another who is going for the same dates doesn't.

"So far, we haven't had any problems," Davis said.

There are a few challenges with scheduling leave Davis admits.

Ensuring that Soldiers taking R&R attend mandatory briefings when they are scheduled.

If Soldiers do not attend these briefs, they will not be able to take leave.

Another challenge is that Soldiers have to be flexible with the dates that they submit," Davis said.

A Soldier expecting to travel on one day may have to leave a few days before or a few days after the date they submitted. This occurs because there may not be an aircraft available or can also be attributed to bad weather.

If this occurs, the Soldier isn't charged additional leave days or the days aren't subtracted. Instead the whole schedule is shifted.

Spc. Richard C. Burton, mail clerk, Headquarter and Headquarters Company, 1st COSCOM, had the opportunity to take R&R leave recently.

"I took leave back in the states and it was well worth it," Burton said.

"My family was happy to see me especially since I had just come from Korea prior to deploying," he said.

Burton spent a year in Korea on an unaccompanied tour. After taking a 20-day permanent change of station leave and signing in to Fort Bragg, he deployed 10 days later to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"I would tell every Soldier to take advantage of everything that is offered. Anything that will take you away from the daily routine is a good break," Burton said.

There is another means by which Soldiers can have the opportunity to get away from the stress that comes with working in the combat environment. When mission dictates, Soldiers can take additional time off under the Fighter Management Pass Program.

The FMPP is a four-day pass that Soldiers can take to Qatar, Iraq. Personnel must be deployed for a minimum of 90 days in order to be eligible for this program.

"We have already sent about 22 Soldiers on pass," Davis said.

While at Qatar, there are many services and amenities available for Soldiers.

Billeting in air-conditioned communal tents are available, however should a Soldier have their dependants meet them there, dependants will not receive lodging on site.

At Qatar, Soldiers have the opportunity to golf, eat at commercial restaurants, ride water sports such as jet skis, all at their personal expense. Local excursions are also permitted to the downtown area when there is an escort available.

Qatar also has a fitness center, game room, internet café, phone center, day spa, video hut, a swimming pool and indoor and outdoor courts for volleyball and basketball.

There are rules that Soldiers must observe while participating in FMPP. Soldiers must wear conservative clothing.

"For men, an example of this would be shirts that covers the full torso. For women, dresses or skirts below the knees are acceptable," Davis said.

There is a list of types of clothing that is not authorized. Clothing such as shorts, gauchos, capries, clothing with obscenities, bikinis and flip-flops or shower shoes are not authorized for wear. Other clothing such as athletic wear, bathing suits, athletic shorts, and tank tops can only be worn in the post's gymnasium or swimming pools.

Further guidelines can be obtained from the unit personnel services section.

"There enough FFMP allocations for members of the 1st COSCOM, however, if there was a choice, Soldiers would prefer R&R because they have control over where they can go, who they can go with, and for the most part wear whatever they want to wear unless it is against overall Army guidelines," Davis said.

IMPROVE, from page 9

and senators were informed of the progress made to the DFACs by the 46th CSG and as a result, state officials responded with pictures, posters, and thank you letters "for improving the Soldier's quality of life" signed by them.

"There is a significant difference and improvement in the food since [the 46th CSG] took over," said Master Sgt. Alice F. Walton, 46th CSG Food Advisor.

"We encourage the contractors to taste the food when seasoning it and to use military food cards when preparing it," she said. Military food cards are recipe cards used by Army food service specialist while preparing meals.

The 46th CSG also rewards their contracted cooks with certificates of appreciation once a month. "It makes them feel appreciated and they want to go above and beyond their job. They really take pride in what they do," Walton said.

"When we used to walk in there the walls were all white and blank, now it looks a lot better," said Ruiz.

The concern for a better DFAC came when the 46th CSG first arrived at Taji, and the first changes started with the dinners in January 2005, said Ruiz.

"We get mostly positive feedback (from the Soldiers). They don't really complain but they always have ideas to make it better," he said.

Although the improvements were the product of the initiative brought to Iraq by the 46th CSG, they aren't

the only people who benefit. The Patriot Café DFAC and other facilities are open to all residents on Taji, making life at Taji better for not only them, but for the rest of post and for unit whom will reside here in the future.

Beat the heat!

By www.wamc.amedd.army.mil

Summer is just around the corner. But, for many of us, we are feeling the heat now.

According to the Womack Army Medical Center website, "There are certain factors that may increase your risk of becoming a heat casualty. These factors include but are not limited to lack of acclimatization, poor physical conditioning, fever, dehydration, obesity, older in age, using dietary supplements containing ephedra (ma-huang), and alcohol consumption within 24 hours of exposure."

Adequate water intake is the most important factor in reducing the likelihood of sustaining a heat injury. Drink plenty of water the night before exercise and on hot days, try to drink at least a quart of water per hour while exercising. On cooler days, a half-quart of water per hour should be the minimum during exercise.

Eat meals to replace salts. Drinking too much water and not eating enough salt (hyponatremia) may be fatal.

Remember, heat injuries can be fatal but they are preventable."

ESCORTS, from page 5

mission is at hand. The 561st CSG resolved this by ensuring that Soldiers sole mission was assigned to the gun truck mission.

"So, for example, [administrative] clerks were no longer both admin clerks and gunners or drivers. They were now a member of a gun truck team that focused only on the gun truck mission," Gaston said.

"My gun truck company is a conglomeration of different skill sets. I have everything from truck drivers, former infantryman, to cooks, and cooks in leadership positions out on [convoy logistic patrols] doing convoy escorts. I've got people that do laundry and bath details in their normal jobs who are now out essentially providing security for convoys to get from point A to point B safely," said Capt. Steven B. Shaw, commander, 57th Transportation Company, 561st CSG.

The theory behind this realignment ensured that the Soldiers weren't distracted and that once in the single-

track environment, the Soldiers' proficiency would increase and complacency would not become an issue, Gaston said.

Although this company has come together, members of the command admit that there are still some challenges.

"I have learned that you have to be patient and you have to expect the unexpected because anything can happen," said Spc. Tabatha D. Green, truck driver, 57th Gun Truck Company.

"Sometimes you'll be out on the road for 24 hours at a time and think that you will only be out there for eight hours. The amount of time spent on the road can make a driver or gunner tired," she said.

Despite fatigue, one of the challenges is to keep your eyes on the road at all times and avoid becoming complacent, Green said.

Members of the command also admit that physical fitness is also one of their challenges. "Sitting in the vehicle for hours at a time takes a toll

on the body. Your body mentally and physically has to be up for the challenges. So we make sure that the Soldiers get enough rest before going out on the roads," said Staff Sgt. John Freeman, squad leader and convoy protection plan leader.

Another challenge for the company is that there is a lot to learn in a short period of time. However, the company is learning quickly and all shortfalls are being addressed, Shaw said.

The good news is that they are all coming together and learning fast and they are doing it well.

"We are finding that their experience on the ground is an excellent benefit for us falling in on this mission. And in just in the training we have done over the past four months to get ready for this is paying dividend for them and making life easier and helping them step up to the plate," Shaw said.

The 57th Trans. Co. is an active duty unit from Fort Drum, N.Y. They are currently assigned to the 561st CSG, a reserve unit from Omaha, Nebr.

ROBERTS, from page 9

"I think I have the best job in Iraq. Usually as a battalion commander, you usually end up with a lot of paperwork, but we also get a chance to provide the Soldiers of Anaconda with force protection," Roberts said. "Honestly, the best part of the job is the one where you get out with the Soldier, and I get to hang out with them a lot."

Roberts said his feelings about his service haven't changed much since he originally enlisted in 1968.

"At that time the country was at war, and there were no second thoughts about your job as a citizen to serve," Roberts said. "I don't think any sacrifice I've made compares to the sacrifice made by

others. I don't look at it as a sacrifice and never have. I look at it as what my heart says I should do and I do it."

With such a long career in the military, Roberts takes pride in serving as he did the day he left for training.

Command Sgt. Maj. June E. Seay, TSB command sergeant major, first met Roberts in April 2004 at Fort Gordon, Ga. After meeting him, Seay went on to read more on Roberts and learned his whole story, she said. The following July, Seay became the newest command sergeant major of the TSB, where she was given the privilege to serve with Roberts, she said.

"The Soldiers have been able to benefit from his expertise and input into command and control," Seay said. "I can say I am honestly humbled to serve as his command sergeant major. He's one of the best Soldiers I've ever served with."

Having seen Vietnam and Iraq, Roberts said that wars may change, but the feeling of leaving the homeland to a distant country for a greater mission is the same.

"The one thing I remember was the first day I got to Vietnam; coming across the berm into Iraq wasn't much different. You have to hold tight on your fellow Soldiers to get your job done, and we have an important job to do, to make sure the people of Iraq are fine," he said.

CAMP COOKE, TAJI MINI MARATHON

Saturday, May 7

Sponsored by: One America 500 Festival Mini-Marathon

Your choice to participate in 6.2 miles of fun or

13.1 miles for those looking for a serious challenge!

Contact CPT Kyle Carone or MAJ Miles Townsend
HHC, 46th CSG (A) DNV 529-3519
kyle.carone@us.army.mil
miles.townsend@us.army.mil



COFFEE, from page 16

"The company was a great help in getting this project going, we even named the roaster after one of their employees, Julianne, because she took a personal interest in wanting to do her part in helping to support our troops," Izaguirre said.

Another company donated 700 pounds of raw green coffee beans. The coffee beans originate from a variety of countries within Central America and Africa.

To sustain the coffee shop's operation requires funding. And, although there is labor involved, there is no additional charge for it because the operation is nonprofit.

A 12-ounce bag of coffee or a 16-ounce zip-lock bag costs a Soldier anywhere from \$3 to \$4. A cup of coffee is 50 cents and a latte costs \$1.

Funds generated from the sales of the coffee is recycled into buying more raw coffee beans, maintenance equipment, and accessories, said Maj. Aaron Stanek, plans officer. He was nicknamed "The Accountant" because he handles the informal funds account established to keep the operation running in accordance with Army Regulation 600-20.

"My role in this was to make sure that we were in compliance with

Army policy, and consistent with Army ethics. There was an initial misconception that [the BlackJack Java] was open to only officers. This isn't the case, it is open to everyone", Stanek said.

The group's overriding vision is that since coffee is a passion and an integral part of the military's culture, their product will build esprit de corps and morale will remain high.



Coffeemen: (top row, l-r) Maj. Jeffrey Kemp, Maj. Joseph Izzaguirre, Maj. Chris Meredith; (2nd row) Master Sgt. Randy Eddington, (3rd row) Maj. Aaron Stanek and Lt. Col. Jim Porter; (bottom row) Maj. Stewart Taylor. Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO.

"It's a great way to build a cohesion among 1st COSCOM and other agencies. We have Marines, airman, and civilian contractors

come here and during this time they shoot the breeze or talk shop during their 15 to 20 minute breaks. A lot of business get conducted here," said Maj. Chris Meredith, logistical plans officer. Meredith is nicknamed "The Custodian" because he is responsible for procuring items and ensuring that the area is kept up to standards.

The group hopes to continue running the coffee shop through the end of their deployment.

"It gives a Soldier something special that they would normally never get in this environment. As long as Soldiers want fresh roasted coffee, we'll be here to provide it for them," Izaguirre said.

Other founders of BlackJack Java are Lt. Col. Jim Porter, engineer officer in charge, Maj. Jeffrey Kemp, logistics maintenance operations officer, Maj. Stewart Taylor, chemical operations officer, and Master Sgt. Randy Eddington, engineer non-commissioned officer in charge.

The BlackJack Java shop provides coffee products throughout the day during breaks and roasting is done after the duty day from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. The coffee shop is located at Building 4123, at the 1st COSCOM headquarters.

ISSUING, from page 7

The third station carries items such as DCU trousers, flight suits and mechanic coveralls, an item that is in high demand.

"We have many units that didn't get to deploy with mechanic coveralls, so this is a popular item in our stock," Batien said.

The mechanic coverall is a thick outer garment uniform normally worn by mechanics that protect their skin and DCUs from fuel and oil spill contact.

The final station is personal equipment issue. At this station, Soldiers can exchange and receive initial issue that includes ballistic helmets, pistol belts, canteens, laundry bags and ammo pouches.

Eventually, the 46th CSG's OCIE facility will officially support members of the 3rd Infantry Division stationed at their location.

"Right now we have all Soldiers on Taji coming to us in small numbers, but we want to get to the point where everyone knows about us and we are able to support on that capacity," Gilderoy said.

Like the scenario in Afghanistan, the command hopes to develop the facility into a full-blown CIF that is manned and outsourced to contractors. This

transition will free up the Soldiers who currently man the facilities to conduct other mission requirements and allow for equipment and uniform support on a larger scale.

"I feel more confident about having this support here and in knowing that when there is something wrong with my DCUs, I can just come here and exchange them rather than waiting to go on a convoy to get uniform parts, said Spc. Latonya S. Mullens, automated logistic specialist and 46th CSG OCIE customer.



Spc. Latonya S. Mullens, automated logistics specialist. 46th CSG carries newly issued uniforms issued from the Organizational Clothing Individual Equipment facility issuing point. The facility has improved the quality of life for the Soldiers residing at Camp Taji. Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO.

AVIATION, from page 11

equipment such as aircraft jacks, hoists and maintenance stands.

"Rarely does an aircraft have problems because of its hydraulics, and this is due to the efficient and effective job that we do," said Spc. Michael S. Bertorello, hydraulic repair specialist.

Welder Sgt. David Brown operates the last two sections, Welding and Machine.

"Sgt. Brown runs everything in both of these shops. He does structural repair with his welding and he is responsible for taking raw metal and making tools and equipment out of it," Mayo said.

There is a misconception that aviation units are comprised of mostly pilots, Reeves said.

"What people don't realize is that 75 percent of the Soldiers in Aviation are in maintenance," he said.

While most of the Soldiers are involved in aviation maintenance, the battalion has about 35 pilots that are test flyers, and this is where the battalion's recovery mission comes into play.

"Since we have been here, the unit has conducted three aircraft recovery missions," Reeves said.

When an aircraft goes down, a crew of aviation mechanics and a pilot travel to the crash or landing site, Reeves said.

"Our teams fly the tools and equipment parts to the location. They fix it and the pilot flies it back," he said.

Just recently members of the 4th Bn., 159th Avn. Regt. conducted recovery operations on an aircraft that went down due to a bird flying into the engine.

"The teams that we have are so professional," said Capt. Matthew J. Barbour, UH-60 Black Hawk

pilot, 4th Bn., 159th Avn. Bn., 507th CSG.

"I am very impressed with these Soldiers, and I have only been here a month," he said.

Barbour is responsible for aircraft maintenance and some of the phase teams within the unit.

The battalion does have a few challenges, but nothing they are unable to overcome.

"The amount of aircrafts that come through here is a challenge. Normally the companies are able to handle it. However, the mission increases when you are in a combat environment. But they are doing the mission well, and getting the job done," Reeves said.

The 4th Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment from Fort Bragg, N.C. can deploy anywhere in the world within 36 hours to conduct air assault and air movement operations in support of the XVIII Airborne Corps.

Message to my Soldier

SpC. Clayton Kloehn
HHD, 264th HHD

Happy New Year!! God bless you and ALL soldiers as you enter a new year. I'm proud of you. Hope to see you soon. Love Mom, Carl

Just wanted to tell you I love you and miss you! Love always, Shannon xoxo

.....

Sgt. Travis Branson
364th Supply Company
We love and miss you bunches. Can't wait till you come home. Love, Jenni, Brianna, Travis

.....

Maj. Miles E. Townsend
HHC, 46th CSG
Daddy, We miss you! We tell our friends and others that you are fighting for freedom and we are as proud as we can be! Love, Loren and Ana Townsend

.....

Staff Sgt. Johnson, Dennis
259 FSC
Sweetheart, We wanted you to know how proud we are of you. You make me proud to be your wife. Anxiously awaiting your permanent arrival home. Loving and Missing You, Twan & boys

.....

Pvt. Gavin Moorehead
364 Supply Company, LTF 264
Thanks for representing the Moorehead family in bringing freedom to a suppressed people. Grandpa Moorehead would have been proud of you. We all are. You are in our prayers. Uncle Bill

.....

Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen
HHC, 1st COSCOM
Joe, we love you and miss you and pray for your safe return. Love Pat, Jamaal and Marcus.

Lt. Col. Tommy Lancaster
507th CSG
Thinking of you as always! Big Guy says "Merry Christmas Daddy, I love you" He wants it to still be Christmas! (smile) We love you!! Melanie and T.J.

.....

CPL Jared Jaroszewski
HHD 264 CSB ORF
Jared, remember to keep your head up (or down when you're in the turret!) and this will be over soon. I love you always! Your favorite wife, Kamryn

.....

1st Sgt. Bell, Edward
364th Supply Co., LTF 264th
Hello the love of my life. The boys and I miss you so very much. You and your company are in our prayers. You are our HERO! We Love You.

.....

Sgt Cragg Chaffee
364 Supply Company, LTF 264
Dear Cragg, Hope all is well with you. Greetings and love from Grandma, Papa, all your aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, Kiersten, and us. Lots of Love, Mom and Dad.

.....

SpC. Michael Kite
364 Supply Company, LTF 264
We love and miss you!! Praying for you!! All our love, Mom and Dad

.....

Staff Sgt. Leroy Hamlett
HHC, 1st COSCOM
Hello from home to my wonderful husband. We stand beside you in spirit and behind you in your decisions. We love you and keep you in our prayers.

Sgt. 1st Class Richard L. Weldon
HHC 1st COSCOM

We miss you so much. When you get home, we look forward to: fried apple pies, bath time with lot's of splashing, Singing loud on road trips and cheeseey eggs! -The *Wo Crew*

.....

Sgt. Sarah Lapine
364th Supply Company
Hi Sarah! We love you and miss you. Keep safe and we can't wait until you come back. Love, John, Brandy, and Justin

.....

Capt. Justin Perusek
HHC, 1st COSCOM
We love/miss you and talk about you everyday! Take care of yourself. We pray for your safety, continuously. We can't wait until you return home. Elita, Isaiah, and Cami.

.....

Maj. Stewart Taylor
HHC, 1st COSCOM
We love and miss you very much! Please take care of yourself and the other soldiers. XOXOXO, Debbie, Asia, Aspen, Athens, Ayden and Emery

.....

SpC. Michael D. Fernandez
TSB, 1st COSCOM
We miss you Poppie. God Speed. =Jen

.....

SUBMISSIONS: If you have a deployed 1st COSCOM Soldier and would like to submit a message, email their rank, full name and unit with no more than a 30 word message to sonise.lumbaca@us.army.mil. Messages more than 30 words will be cut off at the 30 word mark or last sentence previous to it in order to allow everyone the opportunity to submit. Please ensure that message do not contain information too personal in nature or inappropriate content.

